

## **SUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL**

### **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

**21<sup>st</sup> MAY 2012 at 7.30 pm in Suckley Village Hall**

**Present:** 30 electorate, 5 Parish Councillors,  
Mr Gerry Brienza, Worcs County Council – Highways  
PC Naulls – West Mercia Police  
Mr Matt Meckin, Head Teacher of Suckley School and  
four pupils.

**In Attendance:** Mrs Diana Taylor, Clerk

The Chairman, Cllr A W Huband welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**Apologies:** District Cllrs A Warburton & D Hughes, Co Cllr C Smith,  
Parish Cllrs Andrew Grieve, Barry Kearley, John Green  
Revd A Bullock, Mr A G Duncan, Mr A Holmes, Mr & Mrs R  
Harward, Mr P Markins

**Suckley Primary School** - Four pupils from the school gave a powerpoint presentation on how they produced a book on the history of the school. This involved all aspects of research, writing, publishing and marketing to ensure its success. One of the most successful ideas was to invite ex-pupils of the school to visit and talk to them about their experience of attending the school. One ex-pupil was in his nineties and all the pupils were fascinated to hear about times past. Other research included visits to Hartlebury Victorian Museum and speaking to Mr Alwyn who published “Aspects of Suckley” for the History Society. Mr Matt Meckin, Head Teacher of Suckley School spoke of the need to create a special curriculum to enable all the pupils to have skills and experience to help them for the rest of their life. The school created a curriculum “hook” that the children are involved in with each class having an end project they work towards. For example in the Autumn the children were taught Spanish. They visited a restaurant and turned a classroom into a restaurant, serving Spanish food. Key Stage 1 pupils made an art gallery in their classroom. Pupil numbers now stood at 63, with 10 new reception children joining in September. The School received an “Outstanding” Ofsted report, and became an Academy in August 2011. This provided greater security for the future of the school and allows a greater freedom to do what is right for the children. Mr Meckin thanked Cllr Walter Huband (Chairman) for his generosity in allowing the school to use some of his woodland for their Forest School. This was hugely popular with all the children.

After a round of applause, the Chairman thanked Mr Meckin and his pupils for coming to the meeting and giving such a very good presentation.

**County Councillor's Report** - The Clerk reported that due to illness, Co Cllr Clive Smith was unable to attend the meeting. He had reported to her that in the new financial year 2012/13 he would be looking to fund out of his budget more VAS speed cameras to help with speeding problems in rural villages.

**District Councillors** - No Report – but apologies had been received from District Councillors David Hughes and Anthony Warburton. The Chairman reported that our District Councillors worked very hard behind the scenes with the Parish Council for the benefit of the Parish.

**Chairman's Report** - this report, covering the work of the Council over the previous 12 months, was circulated to all present.

**West Mercia Police** - PC Naulls reported that crime in the West Mercia area had decreased across the region, with Suckley being a very low crime area. Over the year the statistics were 6 anti-social behaviour, 1 burglary, 1 criminal damage, 2 thefts, 1 vehicle crime and 3 RTA collisions. He was aware of the speeding issues in Longley Green and along the Knightwick Road and the enforcement team had been in action recently. He reported that West Mercia Police were seeking nominations for their Young Citizens Award for young people under 18 who were working in the community. Information of the **new non-emergency Police number 101** was being circulated throughout the West Mercia area, but people could still ring 999 in an emergency situation. A big crime issue at the moment was theft of metal, especially manhole and drain covers. A mobile Police Station regarding Home Security was being arranged, and would be visiting Suckley in the near future. The Chairman thanked PC Naulls for his report.

**Speeding issues** - Mr Gerry Brienza, the Liaison Engineer for Worcestershire County Council Highways had very kindly agreed to speak to the Meeting about how road marking might be able to help with this problem. He acknowledged that there should be more 30 mph repeater signs in the problem areas, and these would be put in place by the Traffic Management team. He confirmed that research had shown that moving the VAS camera to different sites was more effective. Speed bumps would be too noisy, but white line marking to “narrow” the road and slow down vehicles was a possibility. The Chairman thanked Mr Brienza for taking the trouble to attend the meeting – it was much appreciated.

**Woodland Road** - The Chairman, Cllr Walter Huband, reported on the eventual successful outcome of the campaign for the Flood Defences for Woodland Road. This was now in place, and had worked successfully in the recent heavy rainfall. There was still an outstanding issue of increasing the size of the drainage pipe under Knightwick Road. Mr Gerry Brienza confirmed that he had spoken to the drainage engineer about this.

**Community Group & Plan** - Cllr Peter Whatley reported on behalf of Cllr Andrew Grieve. The Community Planning Group's final objective was to identify the needs of the Community with a view to generating a formal document in line with the Localism Bill which was expected to become law in 2012. The final document would be titled Suckley Neighbourhood Plan. It would help to inform the development and planning activities in the parish and provide the basis for justifying access to government funds. At a meeting earlier in the year, core areas for discussion and inclusion in the initial Community Plan appeared to be :- traffic in the parish; the need for a community meeting place attractive to all and the maintenance of the existing character of the parish. These priorities appeared to match other input received by the Parish Council. There was, however, still a requirement to canvass the whole parish concerning their needs and opinions by means of a formal survey via e-mail and paper form. If anyone was able to help the Planning Group, could they please contact Cllr Andrew Grieve or the Clerk, Diana Taylor. As part of the Community Group Dr Anne Lewis reported on the "Good Neighbour Scheme" which went live on 1<sup>st</sup> April. The scheme was still in its infancy, but the core team was trying to establish a database of useful information to which volunteers could turn if needed. The most important thing was to be aware that the Scheme existed, and the number to dial should anyone need help or know someone who could benefit from the Scheme was 01886 840480. All sorts of skills had been offered, and any offers from potential volunteers would be appreciated.

**Diamond Jubilee Event – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2012** - Ness Harworth reported on the forthcoming Jubilee Event to be held on the Playing Fields from 2.30 pm on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> June. A Family Fun Sports day was planned, followed by a children's Jubilee Tea. There would be a Bouncy Castle, Stalls, Ice Creams, a Bar, Cream Teas and a special performance by Arthur Bancroft's Suckley Children's String Orchestra. In the evening there would be a Family Barn Dance, Bar, Pig Roast & Raffle. The organisers were hoping for a good turn-out for this community event.

## **REPORTS FROM LOCAL ORGANISATIONS & TRUSTS**

**Footpath Wardens** - Apologies had been received from our Footpath Wardens, Mr Richard Harward and Mr Peter Markins. The Clerk read out their report to the meeting. Since this time last year they had continued to maintain and hopefully improve Suckley's footpaths and bridleways, but relied heavily on users to tell them about any problems. Feed back was very important. In November two fingerposts were sawn off and removed and they did wonder if we were in for an epidemic of signpost theft. Had the demand for and price of kindling wood on garage forecourts rocketed in line with the massive increase in oil prices? It appeared that this was not the reason. They were disappointed when the opening up of the view from Lady Waechter's memorial seat was given the thumbs down by the landowner and had to be abandoned. They wished everyone enjoyable walking in the coming year.

**Suckley History Society** - Mrs Liz Devenish reported on the activities of the newly revived Suckley History Society which had started in the millennium but had sadly petered out over recent years. New membership now stood at around 30. Recent meetings of the Society which are held in the Village Hall had covered diverse subjects ranging from Bromyard Railway Branch Line to migration. A field trip was planned for 30<sup>th</sup> June and a trip to the Archaeology Archiving Service in September.

**Suckley P.C.C.** - Dr Anne Lewis reported on behalf of the Revd Andrew Bullock on the activities of the Church in Suckley over the last 12 months. There were now 8 PCC members. 9 general meetings and several others had been held to discuss the reordering, events and needs as they arose. The All Age service on the first Sunday of the month continued to be well supported. On the second Sunday of the month an Evening Service is held that varies between Healing, Evening Prayer and a Celtic Service. On the fourth Sunday Holy Communion is celebrated with Sunday School at 11.0 am. A Christingle Service with orchestra was held, plus the Service of 9 Lessons & Carols. A Fund raising Wine & Canapes summer Party was held at the White House hosted by Mr & Mrs Persey which raised nearly £500 for the church and pre-school. Teddy Bears brought their owners to a Teddy Bears picnic after church in July which was very much enjoyed. The Christmas Fair was held in the Village Hall and raised funds for the church and other village groups. A recent event with Phillip Serrell also raised nearly £500 for each of the church and pre-school. The Church Accounts revealed that again its income failed to cover expenditure with a similar deficit to the previous year. Planned projects include a hearing loop sound system. Thoughts were also centred on the reordering of the church to make it more user friendly and more useful to the adjacent Suckley School. With the small number of regular churchgoers the Church could only make ends meet by drawing on its reserves which would fail to keep the church in the black within a decade. The Church needed basic toilet and kitchen facilities and together with the expanding needs of Suckley School the PCC had taken the opportunity to plan the re-ordering of the Church. This would provide a rental income stream from the use of the new facilities. An architect – Mr David Duckham – had been commissioned, and a Steering Group chaired by Mrs Liz Devenish had been set up for the SPACE project. Dr Lewis thanked all those valuable individuals who continued to work hard to keep the church going, by cleaning, arranging flowers and winding the clock. Several school parents had enabled the church to be kept unlocked during term time so that visitors could enjoy the peace and beauty of the church. Further volunteers were also needed. The SPACE project would be having a stall at the Jubilee Event on 4<sup>th</sup> June to give everyone the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback with thoughts and ideas.

**Suckley SPACE Report** - Mrs Liz Devenish gave an update to the meeting on the SPACE project (Suckley Parish Academy & Church Enterprise). She re-iterated the need to secure the future of the church – to keep it open for future generations. To do this, the church had to respond to the changing needs of the school and the village as well as the needs of the church itself. The school had been awarded an outstanding Ofsted report and with its growing numbers was desperately in need of extra space for assemblies, PE, concerts and lunches. The church was also in desperate need of an

income stream to enable it to survive and remain alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many other churches had successfully reordered and the PCC had visited a number of churches in the area which had gone through this process. The plan was to open up the main body of the church as a large multi-functional space together with the provision of toilets and good quality kitchen facilities. Underfloor heating, draught proofing and new lighting/decoration would make the space warm and comfortable. A mezzanine floor in the Tower and partitioning the Lady Chapel and vestry could provide further meeting rooms for the school and other village activities. The Steering Group would be seeking views and ideas with a parish survey and there would be an open meeting in the Autumn. Fund raising was already under way. A number of residents expressed their concern with the proposals – especially with the removal of pews and the amount of time and space that the school might use the church to the detriment of other church users and services i.e. funerals/weddings/baptisms etc.

**Suckley Playing Fields** - Cllr Carol Luton reported to the meeting on a fairly quiet year as they had lost the Nelson team and the Cradley Boys team who had also mown the pitch. The pavilion was being made ready for the Jubilee Event with new tiling and painting. Some vandalism and fly tipping had taken place, which had been reported to the Police. Good news for the Playing Fields was that the Nelson Football 100 Club Account which had lain dormant for a number of years had accumulated approximately £3K. She had contacted old 100 Club members, most of whom had agreed to donate their money to improve the facilities at the Playing Fields. Thanks were due to Cllr John Green for his tireless efforts in clearing up the litter, undertaking running repairs and maintaining the risk assessments on the Field.

**The Hill Trust** - No report available

**Public Questions** - None

The Chairman thanked the Parish Councillors for their support to the Council over the last year with special thanks to the Clerk Diana Taylor for all her hard work. He then closed the meeting and thanked everyone for coming. All were invited to stay and have a glass of wine or fruit juice with nibbles provided by the Parish Councillors.

**The Minute Book & Audited Accounts for 2010/11/The Parish Council Accounts (unaudited) for 2011/12; the Annual Accounts & Reports for local Charities and Trusts were available for inspection.**